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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to give parents practical suggestions for guarding against their children's use of illegal drugs and to help them identify children who are already drug users. The drugs most children start out with are the two most dangerous drugs in our country, alcohol and nicotine. These drugs are dangerous because they are legal, and their use is treated casually. Many experts believe them to be "gateway" drugs providing entrance into the world of illegal drug use. In any case, the disease of addiction seems to follow a predictable course whether it involves alcohol or illegal drugs. There is no one psychological profile than can be identified as a prototypic addictive profile, but youngsters with poor self-esteem seem to be particularly at risk. Fourteen signs of drug use are outlined for parents. While there is no foolproof way to keep children from drugs, values education, promotion of self-esteem, and limit setting can help them choose a drug-free lifestyle. Some treatment alternatives are briefly discussed, and three resources for help are listed. (SLD)

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